

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 IO-13 DPW-01 AID-20

/102 W

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P 110550Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2537

SECDEF WASHDC

CJCS WASHDC

INFO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCPAC CP SMITH HI

USSAG/7AF NKP THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8330

USIA FOR VOA NEWSROOM AND IEA

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: REPORT OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES FROM BOMBING AT
VEAL SBOV

REF: PHNOM PENH 8237

1. PARA 3 OF REFTTEL INDICATED NEED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
FROM USSAG ON AIR STRIKES IN AREA. INFORMATION RECEIVED
INDICATES AIR STRIKES CONDUCTED TWOKILOMETERS SOUTH
AND EAST OF ORIGINAL COORDINATES AND ABOUT ONE
KILOMETER SOUTH OF AREA INDICATED BY SCHANBERG.

2. EMBASSY PERSONNEL VISITED AREA TO ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY/
CONFIRM REPORTS. LOCAL INHABITANTS WERE UNABLE TO SPECIFY
CAUSE OF CASUALTIES, BUT DID CONFIRM THAT THERE HAD
BEEN CASUALTIES FROM THE FIGHTING. FOR EXAMPLE:
ONE BOMB CREATOR WAS SEEN ON NORTHERN EDGE OF ROUTE ONE
APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF KILOMETER EAST OF ORIGINAL
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COORDINATE (NOT NEAR LOCATION OF US AIR STRIKE). IN

NEAR VICINITY THE CONCRETE PILLARS SUPPORTING A WOODEN FRAME STRUCTURE HAD COLLAPSED. THE FRAME REMAINED INTACT BUT THERE REMAINED NO SIDING NOR ROOFING ATTACHED TO THE FRAME. LOCAL INHABITANTS TOLD EMBASSY PERSONNEL THAT QTE WHEN THE PLANES CAME THEY ALL FLED EXCEPT FAMILY OF FIVE IN THAT HOUSE. WHEN THE FIGHTING ENDED THEY RETURNED AND FOUND THE FIVE PERSONS DEAD UNQTE. THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO SPECIFY THE CAUSE BUT ASSUMED THAT QTE THE PLANES UNQTE HAD CAUSED THE DEATHS. VERY CLOSE TO THE HOUSE, HOWEVER, THE GROUND SHOWED CLEAR EVIDENCE OF OTHER ORDNANCE IMPACT. TREES CLOSE TO THE HOUSE WERE CUT OFF AND BLACKENED ABOUT 3-1/2 TO 4 FEET ABOVE GROUND YET TREES BETWEEN THE BOMB CRATER AND THE HOUSE WERE STILL STANDING AND RELATIVEY UNDAMAGED.

3. AT WAT VEAL SBOV (NORTH SIDE OF ROAD AT ORIGINAL COORDINATES) EMBASSY PERSONNEL SAW WHAT APPEARED TO BE ARTILLERY CRATERS. ONE OF THE LOCAL MONKS AGREED THAT THE CRATERS WERE FROM ARTILLERY AND ADVISED THAT THERE WERE NO DEATHS AT THAT LOCATION.

4. EMBASSY PERSONNEL CONTINUED TO SEARCH ALONG THE ROAD AND ON TWO SIDE ROADS FOR EVIDENCE OF BOMBING IN AREA. SHANBERG POINTED OUT ON MAP. LOCAL INHABITANTS INFORMED EMBASSY PERSONAL THAT NINE PERSONS HAD BEEN KILLED QTE BY THE PLANES UNQTE IN AN AREA LESS THAN ONE KILOMTER AWAY BUT THAT IT WAS TOO DANGERSOUS FOR US TO GO THERE.

5. THE RESULTS OF VISIT WERE THEREFORE INCONCLUSIVE. NO US AIR STRIKES WERE CONDUCTED IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA VISITED BY EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND THE AREA OF US AIR STRKES COULD NOT BE VISITED. ALL US STRIKES WERE CALLED IN BY COMMANDER OF THE AREA FORCES ON THE GROUND AND THAT COMMANDER DENIES REPORT OF CASUALTIES FROM AIR STRIKES. ONLY ONE POSITIVE BOMB CRATER WAS SEEN BY EMBASSY PERSONNEL AS INDICATED ABOVE. CONSIDER THIS MATTER CLOSED.
SWANK

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